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LETTER DATED 18 AUGUST 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit the text of the statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 17 August 1999 concerning the developing situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) G. M. GATILOV
First Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the
United Nations

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Annex

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

In connection with the extremely dangerous developments in the situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation deems it necessary to make the following statement. In Moscow, we are disturbed that the process of disarming the Kosovo rebels is moving extremely slowly. There is every reason to believe that a significant part of the weapons subject to surrender by day 60 of the demilitarization process (20 August) will be concealed. There is a risk that even the agreement on the complete disarmament of the Albanian extremists in Kosovo within 90 days will not be fulfilled. The weapons in question are the ones which the rebels are actively using in order to set up their own regimes in that autonomous region of Yugoslavia.

The activities of the Albanian extremists are challenging the international community and are a blatant violation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Despite the clear demands of the Security Council, outbreaks of violence are continuing in Kosovo and killings of peaceful inhabitants are on the rise, as are incidents of arson and looting against the non-Albanian population. Essentially, ethnic cleansing is in full swing in Kosovo.

This s the result of the policy of appeasement of Albanian separatism pursued by a number of Western countries.

Unfortunately, we are obliged to note that the international forces deployed in Kosovo are not coping with the wave of terror which has enveloped this region. We believe that the Security Council resolution gives the international forces enough authority to take more decisive action to restore order. It is also necessary to speed up the deployment of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, which is charged with maintaining civil law and order and performing basic administrative functions in this region during the transitional period.

The passivity of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia towards the crimes being perpetrated in Kosovo is nothing if not bewildering. The international community must take energetic steps to avert the dangerous trends in the developing situation in Kosovo and divert the process towards a political settlement while fully respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. Nobody should be under any illusion that these fundamental principles for an equitable solution of the Kosovo problem can be ignored. We cannot turn a blind eye to the terrorism, separatism and ethnic cleansing which are being perpetrated against the will of the international community. The abnormalities in the situation in Kosovo demand energetic, responsible action to correct them.